



Feb. 16, 2017  
**Testimony to the  
Appropriations Committee  
Regarding the Governor's Budget**

H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR

**Connecticut Cancer Partnership**

I am writing on behalf of the Connecticut Cancer Partnership in support of the Connecticut Department of Public Health's (DPH) request to the Appropriations Committee to **include Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine in the vaccines purchased within the insurance fund.**

By law, DPH must also administer a state childhood vaccination program that provides vaccines at no cost to healthcare providers within available appropriations. DPH receives state funding from an annual insurance "health and welfare" assessment fee to purchase and distribute vaccines free of charge to health care providers for all children who are not eligible under the federal Vaccines for Children entitlement program. Under this law, vaccines must be made available to all children who are ineligible for the VFC program regardless of insurance status.

The full Connecticut Cancer Partnership Advisory Committee discussed this issue on February 15, 2017 and voted to provide testimony in support of this proposal.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) states that HPV vaccination provides effective, safe, and lasting protection against the HPV infections that most commonly cause cancer.

**The HPV vaccine is effective**

- After 10 years of HPV vaccination in the United States, evidence suggests that HPV vaccination is making a significant impact on HPV infection and HPV associated cancers and disease.
- Since the introduction of HPV vaccine, prevalence of HPV infection, genital warts, and cervical pre-cancers has decreased in the United States.
- HPV Infections: A study published earlier this year found a 64 percent drop in infections with the four HPV types targeted by the quadrivalent vaccine among teen girls (ages 14-19).
- Genital Warts: A 2012 study found a 38 percent drop in genital warts among teen girls (ages 15-19).
- Cervical Pre-cancer: A study published last week found a significant drop in high-grade cervical lesions detected through cervical cancer screening and cervical pre-cancers diagnosed from biopsy specimens among teen girls (aged 15-19), decreasing by 8.3% and 14.4% per year, respectively.

**The HPV vaccine is safe**

- More than 200 million doses have been distributed worldwide with more than 80 million doses in the U.S.
- No safety concerns have been identified and reactions to the vaccine have been mild and similar to those of other childhood vaccine.
- Nearly 10 years of post-licensure vaccine safety monitoring in the United States provide continued evidence of the safety of HPV vaccines.

- Data on safety are also available from post-licensure monitoring in other countries for both vaccines and provide continued evidence of the safety of HPV vaccines.
- Syncope can occur among adolescents who receive any vaccines, including HPV vaccine. ACIP recommends that clinicians consider observing patients for 15 minutes after vaccination.

### **The effectiveness of the HPV vaccine does not appear to wane over time**

- Studies have shown that protection with HPV vaccine lasts at least 10 years with no signs of the protection weakening.

### **HPV is now only a 2 dose series when started before 15 years of age.**

- The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends only **two doses of HPV vaccine** for adolescents who begin the vaccination series before age 15.
- HPV vaccine produces a more robust immune response in preteens than in older teens.
- For 9 through 14 year olds, the 2-dose series provides the same protection than the three-dose series in older adolescents. Antibody levels were significantly higher for all nine 9-valent vaccine types in 9 through 14 year olds who received a 2-dose series (0, 6 month or 0, 12 month schedule) compared to 16 through 26 year olds who received a 3-dose series (0, 2, 6 month schedule).
- This 2 dose recommendation gives parents an extra incentive to protect their children from HPV cancer early, especially since their child will need three doses if they wait until after their 15th birthday.

The Connecticut Vaccine Program is Connecticut's childhood vaccination program. It ensures all children in the state get the vaccinations they need, when they need them, to stay healthy.

The state buys vaccine at the lowest possible price through a government contract, and gives the vaccines at no cost to clinics, private doctors, and other health care providers. These providers then vaccinate children without charging patients for the cost of the vaccine (health care providers may still charge an administration fee). Without this program, some insurance companies may not cover the full cost of vaccine, making it too expensive for some families.

To date, HPV vaccine has been too expensive to include in the program, but this proposal, should it be funded will allow this important cancer prevention tool to be included in the array of other disease prevention vaccines.

The Connecticut Cancer Partnership is responsible for the Connecticut Cancer Plan, 2014- 2017, the blueprint for coordination of comprehensive cancer control activities in the state, following the CDC approach. The Partnership has made HPV vaccination one of its highest priority initiatives this year.

### **HPV Vaccination is cancer prevention**

- The newest 9 valent HPV vaccine protects against viruses that cause vulvar, vaginal, and anal cancers, precancerous lesions, and genital warts, as well as some oropharyngeal cancers.
- In 2009 approximately 3,000 women in Connecticut were diagnosed with abnormal PAP smears and precancerous lesions requiring surgery. During 1999-2003, Connecticut averaged 137 cases and 37 deaths annually from cervical cancer. 70-80% of these surgeries, cancer cases, and deaths are preventable with vaccine.

- The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends routine vaccination of girls and boys age 11 or 12 years with the two-doses of HPV vaccine.
- Vaccination is recommended for females through age 26 years and for males through age 21 years who were not vaccinated when they were younger.

**What we can do....**

**We can help Connecticut DPH expand access to the HPV vaccine**

- If efforts succeed to make the HPV vaccine universally available through the Connecticut Vaccine Program for all 11-12 year olds , the important barrier of cost will be removed.

I encourage the Committee to support this important cancer prevention strategy.

Sincerely,



**Linda Mowad, Chair, Connecticut Cancer Partnership**